A Single Decision (Take Two)

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Aboard Invisible Hand, on that fateful day above Coruscant, Grievous makes a choice that causes a few little changes for the Separatists and Republic alike. [rewrite of a much older story]
Rated: Fiction T (https://www.fictionratings.com/) - English - Sci-Fi/Friendship - General Grievous, OC - Chapters: 53 - Words: 542,002 - Reviews: 1,397 (/r/11714223/) - Favs: 1,321 - Follows: 1,431 - Updated: Aug 19, 2022 - Published: Jan 4, 2016 - id: 11714223

A Brief Forward

A long time ago, in the year of 2008, 15 year old Timewatch was definitely not happy with the new Star Wars: The Clone Wars show. I distinctly recalled that the opening scrawl of Revenge of the Sith had said there were heroes on both sides, but in this new media, only one side was being presented as legitimate, the other was being presented as irredeemably evil. Yes, we all knew Sidious was controlling both sides, but Lucas himself had wrote it was not a black and white conflict, Padme Amidala had wondered aloud if they were on the "wrong side." How could she say such a thing about the side that was murdering innocent townsfolk and looting planets like Hollywood Nazis, according to this new show? It didn't make sense. So during winter break of his first year in high school, I decided to give this scorned side the recognition they deserved. The best way to do this was to discard the powers behind everything and see what happened when the people who thought the conflict was real took charge. Sidious, Obi-Wan, and Anakin were killed off in the opening paragraphs, Dooku followed not much later, and things that were not well thought-out followed. Superweapons and fleets out of nowhere, weak motivations, seemingly unrelated plot-lines, Ahsoka being brutally murdered... It was a mess.

Not so long ago, during the winter break of 2014-2015, 21 year old Timewatch came back to the story and found it... lacking. After finishing up the Clone Wars show in a few days of binge-watching and some hardcore surfing of Wookieepedia, I came up with a much more narratively solid and slightly less biased story, sacrificing action for character development. Shout-out to Disney for gutting the EU and allowing me to take only good elements for my own use and disregard the shlock put out by writers who needed a paycheck and did the laziest, easiest thing they could. I resolved to have the first chapter of this revisited story posted "around" the time the seventh Star Wars movie came out. A year later, Timewatch delivers. At least I can rest easy knowing I came back to finish what I started seven years ago.

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Chapter 1

Everything was going to plan. Or at least, it had been.

It'd started with a feeling that something wasn't quite right. Dooku had predicted that the two Jedi heroes would board the *Invisible Hand* and make to rescue their precious Chancellor, whereupon Dooku would defeat both Kenobi and Skywalker. Then came the holovised messages to crush Republic morale and perhaps even an execution or two, ending with total victory and a swift escape. Grievous though, had his doubts about the entire scheme. Dooku might have defeated them on a few occasions before, but he was only getting older as the years went by... With the Jedi desperate to rescue their previous Chancellor, they'd be fighting with more desperation than ever.

To think, even with that knowledge, Grievous had nearly kept himself on the bridge! That single decision to go up there might have won the war for him. *Might* have.

Dooku had crushed Kenobi, just as planned, that was true enough. But young Skywalker had bested him, and direly wounded him, which was not as planned at all. When Grievous and his guard had strode out of the lift, the shock of the sight froze his boisterous greeting in his vocoder. The boy had his sabers at Dooku's throat, while the Chancellor looked on with vivid interest. They didn't notice him. "Do it!" hissed Palpatine, breaking the silence. Skywalker decapitated the Count.

He's dead! Grievous had thought in that moment, *Dooku is dead!* What did he do now? What was Sidious going to do now?

"You did well, Anakin. He was too dangerous to be kept alive." Palpatine said, as Skywalker released him.

"Yes, but-" Palpatine's expression changed from relief to fury, and Skywalker whipped about. They had noticed his presence.

In his shock and confusion, Grievous fell back on what he knew best:

"Kill them!" he roared to his droids. Grievous shed his cloak, drew his sabers, and loped down the stairs. Skywalker rushed at him, there was a flurry of red and blue and green light, and then all faded to darkness.

"...sir? Sir?" a battle-droid tapped its hand on his facemask. "Are you alright- gah!"

Grievous blinked, looking into the red eyes of one of the magnaguards, who had pushed away the offending battle-droid. "It is done, General." the magnaguard said flatly.

"What..?" Grievous groaned, squinting in the light. He pushed himself off the floor, sitting up as best he could. His head spun, and he could not see clearly. "What is done?"

"We killed them, sir, just like you ordered!" a battle-droid announced proudly.

"Killed-?" Grievous looked down in front of him. There was Skywalker, riddled with blaster-marks. Over further was Palpatine, sprawled on the floor. "Just as I ordered..." Grievous muttered. Skywalker's anti-climactic demise was almost disappointing. "Not even a Jedi can block everything, it seems." Grievous said. He tried to stand, but fell back against the stairs, his coughing only making the sudden vertigo worse.

"Your head is wounded." a magnaguard said. "You should attend the medical bay, General."

"Kenobi!" he rasped. "Is he still alive?"

"Yes, sir. And unconscious." said a battle-droid.

If he still had teeth, Grievous would have grit them. He grabbed a railing, and pulled himself up, swaying about on his taloned feet. "I have wanted this for a very long time..." Grievous muttered, picking up Kenobi's lightsaber. "I should kill him right now."

"Probably-" the droid commander was silenced with a light cuff.

"I didn't ask you! Secure him. Then take the bodies to the nearest airlock, and get a camera droid."

Minutes later, Grievous stood tall, wrapped in his cloak, with a magnaguard at his side to hold him steady. "Make sure he is never on camera." he said, fighting off waves of nausea.

"Of course, sir." said the droid commander, making one last alignment of the bodies of Skywalker and Palpatine.

"We are ready." reported the magnaguard managing the camera droid.

"Put this on every frequency there is, the whole galaxy must know what has happened here." Grievous ordered. "And show my right side only!"

The other magnaguard nodded. "We are live." he said, and the broadcaster droid blinked a red light next to its lenses, as it hovered in place.

"Ah... greetings, misbegotten subjects of the Republic!" Grievous purred, in his best voice of confidence, the words Dooku and he had prepared for this moment coming back to his mind. "You know who I am. Perhaps you recall the breaking news I delivered earlier today, regarding the capture of your *beloved* Supreme Chancellor Palpatine? I promised you the end of his corrupt and rotting regime, and I come before you now to deliver on that promise! Behold!"

Grievous pulled up the body of Palpatine, limp and cold. He tried to smile as he imagined the horror his foe must been feeling right now. "The savior of the Republic, so high and mighty in life! But in death, just another corpse." He dropped the body, and pulled up Skywalker's next. "And the Hero with No Fear! Hah! Not killed by our great Count, nor even by me, but shot down as they turned and ran to escape my wrath! The cowards, the fools! A fitting end, I say."

Now the camera droid moved carefully, turning to look at the airlock door, and pulling back in such a way as to avoid showing the supporting magnaguard. "Watch carefully, subjects of the Republic." Grievous said, as he showed the galaxy the two blaster-riddled bodies. "This is the fate of those who oppose the coming flood. Crushed like common rats..." A droid opened the airlock, and Palpatine and Skywalker flew out. The camera kept recording until the last of the air had whistled and whined away, and then shut off. Out in the void, the battle continued all around them, the bodies of the slain foes spinning into the great silence beyond. The doors closed, and Grievous fell to his knees.

"Your head is wounded." the same magnaguard said again, as the chamber re-pressurized. "You should attend the medical bay, General."

"Yes, yes, very well..." he coughed out. "Tell Captain Dofine he has command."

"Of the ship?" asked the commander battle-droid.

"Of everything!"

Just then, *Invisible Hand* rocked and lurched, and all went dark again.

That was how Grievous found himself drifting back into consciousness, ever so slowly, reflecting on deeds done, until he became aware of where he was and when he was. The quiet whirring of the ship's engines sounded, some liquid bubbled, machines made their small noises.

"Finally. I was starting to think you'd never wake up." said a metallic voice. "Sometimes you are terribly dull..." There were only a few beings in the galaxy that could talk to Grievous like that without consequence: Darth Sidious, Count Dooku, and EV-A-4D, his medical droid. And since it was a droid talking...

"What happened this time, doctor?" asked the general.

"Oh, nothing *too* serious. Just some minor concussive damage, nothing I couldn't fix here." said A-4D. "I see that Count Dooku is dead."

"He is."

"And that leaves you in charge of the entire Confederacy. No one can overrule you now."

"What are you getting at?" A-4D said nothing, but instead activated the containment field bonds on the medical bed. "Insolent droid!" Grievous spat. "I-"

"Please, master, try and understand that this is for your own good." sighed A-4D, dimming his photoceptors as if he were narrowing his eyes in annoyance. "Count Dooku was our highest authority, we both answered to him. Now that I only answer to you, I can bring to light an issue that I have been kept silent on – against my will, I'll have you know – for some time now."

"Speak." Grievous said, testing his limbs against the bonds anyway.

"It's something I've noticed when I look under your skull. Dooku told me never to tell you about it, under any circumstance, but he's dead now and-"

"Get to that point."

"Well, I remembered that you once told me that your one condition for being reborn as a monstrous cyborg and tyrant of worlds was that your mind not be tampered with... Well, master..."

A burning, seething feeling took hold in what was left of Grievous's natural body. "Go on, doctor." he said, already sure of what the droid was going to say next.

"To put it simply, they did exactly that." A-4D clasped his claws, as if imploring his master to have mercy on the bearer of bad news. "They enhanced your reflexes and balance, which was a benevolent addition. But they greatly amplified your tendency to anger, to the point where it overtakes many other emotions, as we've all seen and suffered. In fact, they even put blocks on some of your memory centers-"

"OUT!" roared Grievous, writhing against his bonds in fury. "Take it all out!"

"Master, some of the memory blocks are suppressing potentially traumatic-"

"Traumatic? Do you think I'm some sniveling weakling? Take it out!"

"As you command, but I think I'll leave the improved reflexes in, I know you'd regret removing those as soon as the next Jedi beats you in a fight." A-4D said, merrily deploying his surgeon's tools. Grievous tried to lift an arm to swat the droid, but it was still locked down. "And I won't remove these bindings quite yet. Just in case."

"I'm going to kill you, doctor."

"Don't make me turn off your vocoder. Now, hold still, this *is* brain surgery here..."

Eventually, after much muttering by A-4D, two tiny chips dropped down on the tray with a clink. "There you have it, master." A-4D said, deactivating the bindings. Instantly, Grievous jumped back to his feet.

"I feel no different than before."

"Nonetheless, your mind is fully under your own command again. Maybe you can even go a day without knocking the head off any droid that displeases you." He ignored the remark.

"The guns have stopped." Grievous said, looking around the medical bay. No one was there, of course, A-4D had probably shooed them all out to give his master privacy. *Touchingly loyal, for a droid*, Grievous thought. That was the one virtue which kept him from being turned into scrap for his unbecoming attitude.

"Yes, we went into hyperspace half a day ago." A-4D said.

"Then are are approaching Utapau?"

"I believe so. Why the hurry?"

"I wish to have a *talk* with San Hill..." Grievous clicked his claws together. He always knew that Muun was nothing but a slimy, two-faced liar. Now he would pay for-

"Master, I must remind you that killing one our most important war material contributors would be nothing but a bad idea, especially when we're *losing.*"

"Quiet, droid." said Grievous. "Everything has gone according to plan."

"And now what?" A-4D asked. "There's still hundreds of Republic fleets out there, in case you didn't know." But Grievous ignored him again.

"I do not intend to kill the banker. Not yet. Now bring me my cloak, I'm going to-" Another fit of coughs stopped Grievous in mid-sentence.

"There's nothing I can do about that. Your lungs took quite a beating on Coruscant, and we don't have the facilities to heal them here. I'm afraid you'll just have to live with the pain for now." The droid sounded anything *but* afraid as he fetched Grievous's cloak. "Do try to avoid any more accidents today, master, you've already been beaten up by two Jedi as it is."

"Hmmph. One last thing: what have you done with Dooku's parts?"

"They're in the morgue, master."

"Fix the body. As much as I would love to present Dooku's head to the Council, I don't think Sidious would like it."

Grievous stalked down *Invisible Hand*'s corridors, and made his way to the bridge. When he entered, the crew hastily stood to attention.

"General." Captain Lushros Dofine saluted, backlit by the vortex of hyperspace. "Many congratulations to you for this magnificent victory today."

"How went the rest of the battle?" asked Grievous, uninterested in flattery or praise, even from a warrior he respected. Though, he supposed that the Captain's mention of victory ought to have told him everything...

"We did not have much hope after being trapped by the Republic's reinforcements, but after your disposal of the dictator and his pet, the enemy seemed to lose heart." Dofine said. "We were able to punch a hole through their lines and escape into high orbit, we were on our way out within the hour."

"Losses?"

"They were heavy, General, but we gave them the worse of it. They lost a good lot more than we did, and their leader too." Dofine folded his arms, and smiled smugly; about as much emotion as he ever showed. The Nemoidian was a strange one, as far as his kind went. "I do not deny that there was a certain satisfaction in watching Skywalker's corpse fly off into space. Especially with that stunt he pulled with Mar Tuuk over Ryloth in mind."

"I regret I never got to face him in combat... Nor even had the chance to insult him in person before his death." Grievous paced about the bridge. "How long until we reach Utapau?"

"Three hours, General." said Dofine. "But there are two issues I would like to bring up, with your leave."

"Yes?"

"First, where is Count Dooku?"

That was something Grievous would have to address soon, to everyone. Most people were not going to like the answer, and they were going to like the implications even less... But Dofine was trustworthy. "He's dead, Captain." The Nemoidian gave a slight sign of a frown, but spoke again.

"Secondly, the one that has been on my mind since the battle..." Grievous gestured for Dofine to go ahead. "We tracked two Jedi who landed in the hangar, but only one died. What became of the second?"

There was silence for a moment, and a shadow of concern came upon Grievous. "I have no idea, Captain."

Eight pairs of red eyes stared at him in the dim light. Obi-Wan had been in strange places before, but being held as a *guest* in the barracks of Grievous's own magnaguards was another thing entirely. Escape was out of the question, his utilities and lightsaber were missing, and he'd learned the hard way that the droids had vented the corridor's air outside their barracks. Their competence was uncanny.

"I don't suppose you'll tell me how long I've been here?" he asked, stretching his arms as best they could, bound as they were. The droids stared wordlessly, as they had since he woke up hours ago. "No? Very well..." This was shaping up to be one terrible experience. Again, Obi-Wan wondered: W*here is Anakin, and where is the Chancellor?*

He had a bad feeling that he would not like the answers to those questions.

Author's note: In case you weren't around for the original story, which will soon be deleted to hide my shame, this is a very heavy alternate universe. Please voice any critiques you have, I'm a big boy now, I can take a bit of heat. I especially need help with style, I have trouble with both over-detailing and under-detailing to counter my over-detailing habits.

1. Chapter 1: It All Begins
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